

# K-12 Quality Improvement

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## Mission

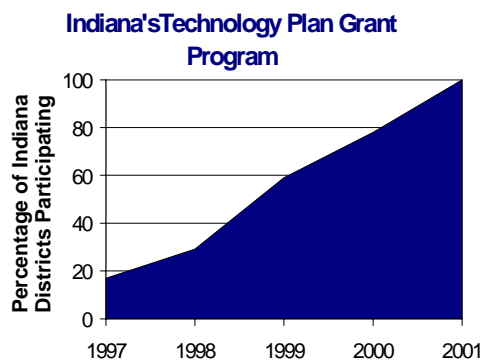
To enhance the professional skills of Indiana's teachers and administrators so that they can provide the best possible instruction to Indiana's students, while utilizing research-based programs and strategies that apply the most up-to-date technological advances effectively and efficiently.

## Summary of Activities

Education quality improvement programs administered by the **Department of Education** (DOE) for local schools include the following:

- ◆ Professional development grants to local schools help teachers update their skills and knowledge.
- ◆ The Indiana Principals Leadership Academy (IPLA) has provided leadership training to 2,400 elementary, middle, and high school principals. The training increased their effectiveness as administrators in 732 school buildings that serve over 430,000 of Indiana's students.
- ◆ Innovative School Improvement funds provided professional development opportunities in 41 schools serving over 35,000 students. Grant awards ranged from just over \$6,000 to over \$167,000.
- ◆ "Project Set" funds are used to encourage minority, male, and physically challenged students to enter the teaching profession. During the biennium, 3,212 students participated in the program.
- ◆ Service America grants were allocated to 101 school districts, buildings, and classrooms over the biennium. Service learning activities blend community service and academic activities. These activities are diverse; examples include peer-tutoring, interaction with senior citizens, and community needs assessments. All activities provide students with enhanced awareness of the needs of others, opportunities for intellectual growth, and models by which to be exemplary citizens.
- ◆ The AIDS education program provides training to 5,178 educators and school nurses throughout the state as well as providing connectivity through the DOE web site and listserv to support the exchange of information at the local and state levels.

Support for the continued integration of technology in the classroom is provided through the Indiana Technology Plan Grant program. The funds support the transmittal of expertise in using technology for education to schools by providing advice, counsel, training, and resources. Nearly 5,000 educators participated in technology-based training activities during the biennium.



Nine regional Education Service Centers provide a variety of services to 90 percent of Indiana school corporations, including 667,512 students and 40,700 educators. The centers provide cooperative purchasing, serve as regional professional development sites for educators, provide technology integration and training services, and serve as distribution centers for DOE materials.

## External Factors

The most current academic and field research indicates that for professional development activities to be effective, they must be ongoing and sustained. New accountability and standards legislation requires professional development activities to be part of comprehensive school improvement plans. When the goals and aims of the Education Roundtable and the **State Board of Education** are finalized, state and local professional development programs will be aligned and consistent.

Changing educational tools and methods require an ongoing investment in teacher training. For example, as computer technology becomes a more important part of the education system, teachers will require additional training to utilize those tools effectively.

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## Evaluation and Accomplishments

IPLA has been recognized nationally as an effective instructional leader, and has leveraged the success of its past practices through collaborative efforts with federal Title I programs, special education, higher education, and Education Service Centers. Paoli Senior High School has been selected as a 2000 National Service-Learning Leadership School, joining West Vigo High School as an Indiana representative at the national level. From July 1998 – July 2000, 40% of students served in Project Set entered college. The DOE competed for and was designated as one of only seven Milken Teacher Quality Policy Focus States. This designation gives Indiana a forum for examining factors related to: reinventing teacher preparation; overhauling teacher recruitment, including compensation issues; offering multiple career paths with expanded roles for teachers to serve as instructional leaders or mentors; encouraging and rewarding knowledge and skill; and creating schools that are organized for teacher and student success.

## Plans for the Biennium

In a competitive call for proposals, the DOE was awarded a \$1.8 million grant to participate in *IndianaNext*, sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This grant will help provide leadership and technology training for Indiana school leaders.

## Special Initiatives

Recognizing that high-performing teachers are the backbone of Indiana's education system, Governor O'Bannon Education Improvement Plan includes the following proposals:

- ◆ Beginning in FY 03, \$30 million dollars for professional development block grants for schools to use in providing professional development and continuing education opportunities for teachers. Teachers will have increased opportunities to renew their skills and be exposed to cutting-edge educational techniques and practices.
- ◆ \$4 million to provide five hundred Master Teachers with training to help newer teachers learn best-practice educational techniques and receive valuable mentoring and professional support.
- ◆ \$1 million dollars to provide Indiana's education service centers with the capacity to provide teachers with the latest reading and math resources.

